

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-15 are pending. Claim 11 is amended. Claims 1 and 11 are independent. Claims 1-10 are withdrawn. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

Restriction Requirement

The Examiner has made the Restriction Requirement final, and has withdrawn claims 1-10 from further consideration.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 11, 12, 13/11, 13/12, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hungerford (U.S. Patent No. 2,734,510) in view of Arledter (U.S. Patent 3,870,054); and claims 13/11, 13/12, and 14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hungerford in view of Clark et al. (U.S. Patent 2,881,072).

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Amendments to Independent Claim 11

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, independent claim 11 is amended herein to recite a combination of elements directed to a sheet tobacco manufacturing system, including *inter alia*

“wherein as the carrier sheet and the tobacco powder layer are heated and pressed by said pressing device, a binder liquid constituted by the binder and the liquid infiltrates into both of the carrier sheet and the tobacco powder layer such that the nonwoven plant fibers of the carrier sheet are bound together by the binder, and also that the nonwoven plant fibers and the tobacco powder material are bound together by the binder”.

The Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 11 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Hungerford, Arledter, and Clark et al.

In contrast to the present invention set forth in independent claim 11, the rollers 34 disclosed in Hungerford merely apply pressure to the continuous folded sections of the sheet material W and unite the continuous sections by making use of the adhering qualities of the base film B, into a laminated web L.

Thus, the rollers 34 are not adapted to heat and press the continuous sections in order to allow a binder liquid to infiltrate into the continuous sections. The rollers 34, therefore, are not equivalent to the pressing device of the present invention.

The Arledter document was cited by the Examiner merely to disclose “several spraying/cleaning devices positioned upstream” (page 5 of the Office Action), and the Clark et al. document was cited merely to disclose “a back to back laminating arrangement” that allegedly teaches a “downstream forming device”(page 7 of the Office Action). However, neither Arledter nor Clark et al. can make up for the deficiencies of Hungerford.

At least for the reasons explained above, the Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of elements as set forth in independent claim 11 is not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including Hungerford, Arledter, and Clark et al.

Therefore, independent claim 11 is in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claims

All dependent claims are in condition for allowance due to their dependency from allowable independent claims, or due to the additional novel features set forth therein. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

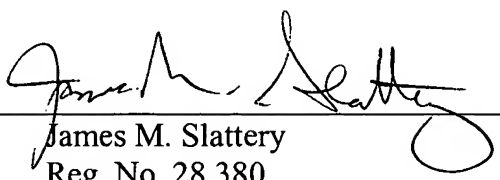
All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 208-4030(direct line).

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,
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